

# "I missed my teachers"

The importance of a close and caring relationship between teachers and students



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# Let's talk 😊

## Good teacher

- Think about your favorite teacher from your past (or present)?
  - Who was that teacher?
  - What did they teach?
  - Why is this your favorite teacher?
  - What characteristics did this teacher have?
    - What good qualities did this teacher have?



# Let's talk 😊

## Good teacher

- Now write down at least 3 qualities that this teacher had.
  - Can you mention some of these qualities?
  - Did you mention similar things?
- What do these teachers have in common?



# Let's talk 😊

## Good teacher

- Now think about you as a teacher.
  - Do you have any of the characteristics that you mentioned as characteristics of a good teacher?
  - Were there qualities in this teacher that you intentionally tried to adopt when you started teaching?



Do you want to share with the group?

# Good teacher – Common themes

- **Passion** for teaching
- **Enthusiastic**
- **Knowledgeable**
- Willing to **listen**
- **Creative**
- **Continual learner**
- **Prepared**
- Has a **safe** learning environment
- **Warm**
- **Caring**



# What made you want to go to school?

- Let's try to remember high school/upper secondary school.
  - Do you remember WHY you wanted to go to school?
- What about university?
  - Why did you attend school?



What made you want to go to school?

- Do you think you could have had the same experience if your education was online?

- Upper secondary school
- University



# Why do students WANT to attend school?

Study in Iceland 2020-2022

Student engagement and teacher-student relationships in upper secondary school

## • Shifting the focus

- We wanted to shift the focus from dropout and school attending problems to students who **want** to attend school
  - We wanted to study **WHY** student want to attend school.
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### Skuldbinding nemenda og tengsl við kennara í framhaldsskóla

Kristjana Stella Blöndal og Elva Björk Ágústsdóttir

► Abstract ► Um höfunda ► About the authors ► Heimildir

Miklu skiptir fyrir farsæla skólalöngu að nemendur taki virkan þátt í skólanum, tengist skólasamfélaginu og finnist náníð merkingarbert. Rannsóknir sýna að stór hópur framhaldsskólánemenda virnist áhuga námi og samsama sig ekki skólanum. Lítil skuldbinding á þessu aldrarskeiði hefur verið rakin til þess að framhaldsskólumhverfið komi ekki nægilega til móts við þarfir nemenda á þessu þroskaskeiði en rannsóknir skortir. Markmið rannsóknarinnar er að varpa ljósi á samokipti nemenda og kennara í framhaldsskóla og hvernig reynsla nemenda mótar skuldbindingu þeirra til náms og skóla. Leitast verður við að svara því hvæða þættir í samskiptunum efla skuldbindingu nemenda til náms og skóla. Tilgangurinn er að dýpka innsýn kennara og annars skólafélis í reynslu framhaldsskólánemenda og þar með stuðla að góðum tengslum kennara og nemenda og farsælli skólalöngu. Byggt er á eiginlegrri viðalrannsókn sem náði til 15 nemenda í sex mismanandi framhaldsskólum. Rannsóknin var framkvæmd á tímum samkomutakmarkana vegna COVID-19 og var spurt um reynslu framhaldsskólánemendanna af samskiptum við kennara fyrir heimsfaraldurinn annars vegar og hins vegar í gegnum tölvuskjal þegar hefðbundin skólalald lagðist af. Með því að beina sjónmál að skólalífi við þessar örfoka ástæður var leitast við að draga skýrar fram sýn ungmenna á þá þætti í samskiptum við kennara sem eru þeim mikilvægt. Greina mátti þrjú megalþemu í upplifun ungmennanna á jákvæðum samskiptum kennara og nemenda. Þau eru 1) að kennarinn leitast við að skapa tengsl við nemendur, 2) að umhyggja og stuðningur kennarans eykur vellíðan nemenda, og 3) að hvernig nærvera kennarans er drifkraftur í námi. Skýrt kom fram hvernig miklu máli tengsl við kennara skiptu fyrir skuldbindingu viðmennda og þessu þess hvernig góð tengsl við kennara höfðu jákvað áhrif á nám þeirra, virkni, vellíðan og gleði í skólanum. Aftur á móti upplifðu þeir minna aðgengi að kennarum í framhaldsskólum en þeir áttu að venjast í grunnskóla. Þótt samband kennara og nemenda breytist eftir því sem nemendur þroskast og framhaldsskólinn sér talinn ópersónulegri en fyrri skólastig, varpa niðursöðurnar ljósi á einnakti hlutverk kennara og hve mikilvægt náð samband kennara og nemenda er fyrir skólalöngu framhaldsskólánema.

**Efniord:** Nám tengsl kennara og nemenda, skuldbinding nemenda, framhaldsskóli, forvarnit, farsæl skólalöngu

#### Inngangur

Á unglingsárum eiga sér stað mikil þáttaskil þegar ungmennin hefja nám í framhaldsskóla og standa frammi fyrir mikilvægum ákvörðunum um menntun sína og framtíð. Skuldbinding til náms og skóla (e. student engagement) skiptir miklu fyrir aðlögun þeirra (Chase o.fl., 2015) og farsæla skólalöngu. Hún tengist góðum námsrangri nemenda og er skortur á skuldbindingu lykillaftur í því flokna feli sem leiðir til þess að nemendur hverfa frá námi og skóla (Alexander o.fl., 2001; Fredricks o.fl., 2004; Kristjana Stella Blöndal og Sigrún Adalbjarnardóttir, 2012, 2014; Rumberger, 2011). Í forvarnarmáli gegn brottförum og í vinna með þeim sem horfið hafa frá námi er því lögð áhersla á að efla skuldbindingu nemenda (Christenson og Reschly, 2010; Dynarski o.fl., 2008; Korrering og Christenson, 2009).



# Why do students WANT to attend school?

- The aim of the study was:
  - to shed light **on teacher-student relationships** at the upper secondary school level
    - and how the students' experience shapes their **engagement** with study and school.
- The analysis seeks to define the **aspects** of these relations that increase engagement



# School engagement

**For students to succeed at school it is important that they:**

Actively  
**participate** at  
school

Feel that they  
**belong** to their  
school

Find their  
studies  
**meaningful**

# School engagement

Large group of students, especially during adolescence, see little point in their studies and find school boring.

- This negative development of student engagement and places them at risk of dropping out, may be traced to the changes of the school environment at upper secondary level (see Eccles et al., 1993)
  - The schools are **larger** than at the previous school level
  - The **social environment** is significantly more **complex**
  - Students have **different teachers** every semester and do not have a **supervising** teacher as they were accustomed to in lower secondary school.

# Covid 19!

- The study took place during restrictions due to COVID-19
- This provided a unique opportunity to highlight students' experiences of **connecting with teachers in the classroom** on the one hand and **through a computer screen** on the other.
- With increasing emphasis on **distance learning** it is important to be aware of **how it serves students' needs during adolescence** and what **effect** it has on **school engagement**.



# Interesting and encouraging findings

Three main themes were identified in the young people's experience of positive social interactions between teachers and students

**1) that the teacher seeks to create a relationship with students**

**2) that the care and support of the teacher enhances students' well-being**

**3) that the teacher's encouraging presence is a driving force for learning**

# 1) that the teacher seeks to create a relationship with students

- The majority of students stated that their relationship with their teachers played a big role in attending school.
  - Students find it important that teachers are **approachable** and "chatty"
- Kristmundur and Frida spoke about the importance of being able to approach teachers in an **easy** and **informal** way:

***"... and just to form these connections with teachers, it's so comfortable to just be like this, okay, I can always ask, I don't have any worry".***

***"You really get to know your teacher. I can talk to them freely. There's nothing stressful about talking to them."***

# 1) that the teacher seeks to create a relationship with students

- Some students talked about the importance of teachers being **interested** in their students' **lives** and **well-being**
- Yrsa said:
  - ***"We all loved her, not necessarily because of her teaching methods, but just because of how good a character she was... She wasn't necessarily the best teacher professionally, but she had a good personality charm".***

## 2) that the care and support of the teacher enhances students' well-being

- For some students, it is very important to experience a **close and personal relationship** with the teachers.
  - “Caring, welcoming, warm”
  - “Grandfather, grandmother, friend, peer”
- Kristmundur explained it in this way:

**“The teachers are also more like not teachers, but more like companions to help you learn and care for you dearly. I've kind of formed relationships with teachers... and I feel like she's just another mom to me. They can talk to you just outside of school just "what's going on in your life?" and stuff like that. Just really nice and wholesome.”**



### 3) that the teacher's encouraging presence is a driving force for learning

- Student mentioned these things in regards to teachers encouraging presence in the classroom:
  - Energy, drive, enthusiasm and fun
  - The teacher's enthusiasm is contagious
- Lárus talked about one of his favorite teacher in this way:

***“...you can see very clearly that the teacher is interested in the subject being taught. It is something that I think is very important because if you have a teacher who is not interested in teaching the subject, you are not going to learn anything... if the teacher is interested, he goes into much more stuff and things are talked about in much more detail.”***

# Interesting and encouraging findings

- It was clear how important a **close** and **informal** relationship with teachers was for their engagement with school and their studies.
- The students described how **strong connections** with teachers had a positive influence on their **learning habits, attitudes, and ambition** with regards to their studies and feelings of **belonging** to school
  - However, they experienced that they had less access and opportunities to establish relationship with their teachers in comparison to lower secondary school.

# Interesting and encouraging findings

- Students felt that many teachers had done their best when transferring classroom teaching to **distance teaching**, but... they missed the “conventional” interactions with their teachers
- The distance learning had a **negative effect** on the **close and personal relationship** with the teachers that the students value.

# Interesting and encouraging findings

- When asked about their experience of distance learning during Covid-19 they said:

***“I was just waking up late and, going to bed late. I was always going to get into studying, you know, and then very little happened.”***

***“It's kind of depressing because naturally my day is just a shitty thing...That's why I really look forward to when school starts. Although I'm not big on routine, it's nice to have a little routine in life.”***

***“I was stuck at home and stopped having a big purpose in my day.”***

***“I just missed my teachers”***

# Interesting and encouraging findings

***"I like it when people sense that the teacher is interested in what he is saying or talking about... that kind of boosts your interest.***

***I think that's just the number one thing for teachers... then only they know how to talk about their subject in a fun way.***

***Teachers who are interested in their own subject matter, know it... and who make an effort in communicating with students"***

***"I think that's the recipe for a good teacher"***

***(Stormur)***

# Interesting and encouraging findings

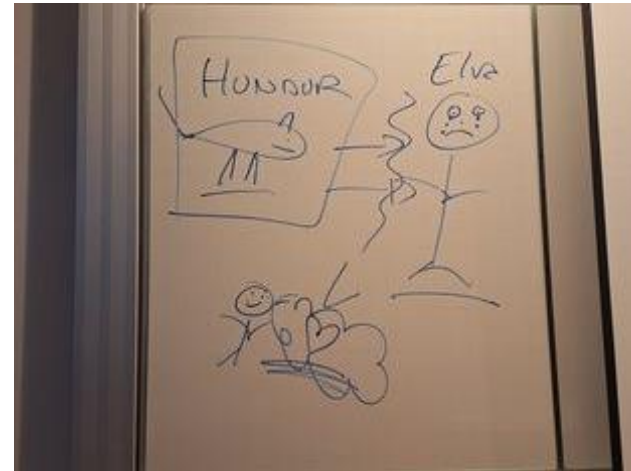
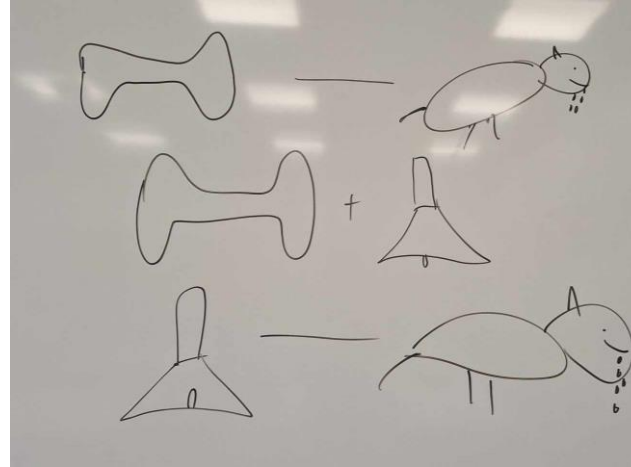
- Although the relationship between teachers and students changes as students grow older our main findings indicate:
  - the **significance** of paying closer attention to the unique role of teachers at upper secondary school level and
  - highlights how **meaningful** it is for the students to feel **connected** to their teachers.
- Additionally, our findings show how important a **nurturing relationship** between teachers and students on **personal** and **face-to-face** level is for students' engagement towards school and their studies which is considered vital to their educational success.

Questions?  
And thank you 😊

Feel free to contact me if you want to talk 😊

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